



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/AC.51/1992/L.3/Add.3
21 May 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND
COORDINATION
Thirty-second session
11-22 May 1992
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FIRST
PART OF ITS THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

V. REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

1. At its 6th and 8th meetings on 13 and 14 May, the Committee considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Reporting on the performance and results of the United Nations programme: monitoring, evaluation and management review components" (A/43/124), and the comments of the Secretary-General (A/43/124/Add.1).

Discussion

2. A number of delegations stressed the need for sufficient resources and training in order to promote adequate self-evaluation.

3. A number of delegations suggested that the first priority should be to improve programme design.

4. While a number of delegations supported recommendation 1 contained in the Joint Inspection Unit report, others expressed reservations regarding the workload involved and the size of the programme performance report it would entail. The latter held that submitting such a report concurrently with the proposed biennial programme budget might also raise some difficulties.

5. With respect to recommendation 2 of the report, a number of delegations were of the view that evaluation functions needed to be strengthened in a cost-effective manner. The possibility of assigning evaluation functions to an inspector-general was proposed by one delegation, while others maintained that the United Nations should rather aim at strengthening current mechanisms, such as JIU and the Board of Auditors.

6. A number of delegations supported recommendation 3 in the JIU report, while others pointed out possible difficulties in undertaking an annual in-depth review in the area of Administration and Conference Services.

7. With respect to recommendation 4, the hope was expressed that the development of an integrated management information system currently under way would contribute to the improvement of the information available for decision-making.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee expressed its concern that over the years, very little improvement had been achieved in providing the legislative bodies concerned with an analytical report on programme performance. Such an improvement was considered essential for Member States to take informed decisions on programmes of work, including the identification of ineffective activities and reformulation of programmes in the light of emerging priorities.

9. The Committee noted with appreciation the high quality of the report and expressed agreement with its diagnosis of the imperfections in reporting on performance and results achieved under the United Nations work programmes. The Committee expressed dissatisfaction with many aspects of the current system for reporting performance, as well as with the limited scope of coverage of evaluation and what it perceived to be a lack of responsiveness on the part of programme managers.

10. Recalling the extensive debate over the years on this issue, the Committee concluded that a future report by the Joint Inspection Unit on the subject would not be necessary.

11. There was general agreement in the Committee that the evaluation function needed to be strengthened through a change of culture within the Secretariat, as well as through recourse to independent external evaluation.

12. The Committee expressed the view that a clearer description of the objectives to be attained and the incorporation of performance indicators would contribute to a better formulation of the programme budget and a more effective system of monitoring and evaluation.

13. The need to clarify the different concepts of evaluation, the monitoring of performance and inspection were emphasized. Those three different aspects of reporting complemented one another.

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14. It was noted that the quantitative approach of the current system of programme performance reporting, required by the Regulations and Rules governing Programme Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation, was necessary but not nearly sufficient, and that the effectiveness of monitoring was a function of the quality of the medium-term plan and the programme budget. To the extent that those procedures were specific in quantifying outputs and activities planned and financed, the effectiveness of monitoring would be enhanced. The Committee also noted that the inclusion of self-evaluation findings on an experimental basis could constitute the basis for a more comprehensive report.

15. The Committee was informed that those issues would be addressed in the prototype of the new budget to be submitted to the Committee at its resumed session.

16. The Secretariat was invited to draw on the experiences of other organizations of the United Nations system, taking into account the specificity of the United Nations itself.
